



STATEMENT

Trudeau must meet our NATO commitments and stop neglecting our troops

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ottawa, ON — The Hon. Michael Chong, Conservative Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and MP James Bezan, Conservative Shadow Minister for National Defence issued the following statement in advance of the NATO Summit in Vilnius:

“Canada’s stature as a trusted and reliable NATO partner has been diminished under the Trudeau government. After eight years of Justin Trudeau, our military is in a state of disrepair. The Trudeau government has spent the cupboards bare, maxing out spending in every government department – except national defence.

“Prime Minister Trudeau has neglected Canada’s armed forces and in the face of increased global tensions, continues to fall short of our commitments on defence. Last year, the Trudeau government spent 1.29% of our GDP on defence, putting Canada 25th out of 29 NATO members. A year after the Ukraine war began, this borders on negligence.

“Our troops are struggling to do the jobs their country is asking of them due to personnel shortages and a lack of equipment. Canadian troops in Latvia were not provided the helmets, body armour and hearing equipment needed for the mission there. Canadian troops in Poland were out of pocket thousands of dollars for unpaid meal expenses. And the RCAF did not have the capacity to send even one aircraft to participate in joint NATO air exercises last month, even though 26 other NATO members did. Canada made a commitment to upgrade our battalion in Latvia to brigade level. But so far, we have been lagging behind and it will not happen unless Trudeau stops neglecting our forces.

“Recruitment must be increased, and equipment needs to be upgraded and replaced. In addition to Canada contributing to collective defence, it is equally important that the military have the equipment it needs to protect our own vast borders, especially in the Arctic where we share a border region with Russia.

“Prime Minister Trudeau has a chance at the Vilnius Summit to make a commitment to address this neglect. It is also a chance for the PM to walk back his private comments to NATO officials that under this Liberal government Canada will never meet our commitments to our NATO partners and allies.

“This week at the Vilnius Summit, NATO will be seeking political approval for more troops, equipment, and money to deter potential aggression. The world changed when Russia attacked Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The war in Ukraine means that enhanced deterrence is needed to ensure our collective defence.

“As Conservatives, we support the commitments Canada has made to NATO and we must make an effort to meet them. Conservatives will stand up for our men and women in uniform and ensure that they have the necessary equipment to protect Canada, fulfill our NATO obligations and defend the interests of Canada and our allies around the world.”